

Epistle to Titus

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(1982 Study)

The following notes on the Epistle to Titus were compiled from a Bible study led by Bro. Frank Shallieu in 1982. They should be utilized with the following understanding:

1. Each paragraph preceded by “**Comment**” or “**Q**” (an abbreviation for “**Question**”) was introduced by someone other than Bro. Frank.
2. The original study did not follow a prepared text but was extemporaneous in nature.
3. Although the transcriber tried to faithfully, with the Lord’s help, set forth the thoughts that were presented in the study, the notes are not a verbatim rendering and, therefore, should be considered in that context.
4. Finally, Bro. Frank did not review the notes for possible errors that may have inadvertently entered the text.

With this disclaimer in mind, may the notes be a blessing as a useful study guide.

EPISTLE TO TITUS

(Study led by Bro. Frank Shallieu in 1982)

Before we begin the study of the Epistle to Titus, a little background information will be helpful. We feel there was a time interval between the writing of 1 and 2 Timothy, during which the Apostle Paul wrote to Titus and Philemon. However, when the Bible was collated, Paul's two letters to Timothy were placed together instead of following the chronological sequence. The same procedure was used with 1 and 2 Thessalonians and with 1 and 2 Corinthians.

Moreover, 2 Timothy 4:10, written later, gives seeming evidence that Titus forsook Paul sometime after this epistle was written to him: "For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; ... Titus unto Dalmatia." Many Bible scholars do not give this slant but merely think that Titus left Paul to go on a mission. However, the context seems to show otherwise. How long the forsaking lasted—and whether or not Titus repented—we do not know, but evidently, he did forsake Paul and the ministry to a certain extent. When we read this letter to Titus, we should keep in mind that it was written in between 1 and 2 Timothy.

At this time, when Paul sensed that his life was terminating, he thought even more seriously and wrote to *individuals* (Timothy, Titus, and Philemon), and not to *ecclesias* (Corinthians, Romans, Colossians, etc.), although he did write the general epistle to the Hebrews. In fact, Paul asked Timothy to bring certain things to him in prison before winter, namely, his cloak, the Scriptures, and parchments (2 Tim. 4:13). Also, Timothy was to bring Mark (2 Tim. 4:11). We believe the parchments were particularly for Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews, his crowning work. He wanted to give the parchments to Luke, who was with him.

Titus 1:1 Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness;

Part of this address is similar to what Paul said in other epistles. He called attention to his being "a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ." However, the rest of verse 1, which is significant, is stated as follows in the Revised Standard: "... *to further the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth which accords with godliness.*" God gave this direct commandment to Paul as an apostle of Jesus Christ. His responsibility was to be a help to those whom God had chosen out of the world—a help in connection with their proper development of *faith and knowledge*. This knowledge was to be along all lines according to *God's instruction and Godlikeness in mysteries as well as in character building*.

Titus 1:2 In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;

In the Revised Standard, verse 2 reads, "In hope of eternal life which God, who never lies, promised ages ago." Of course the hope for the Little Flock is immortality, but the Apostle John (and Paul here) purposely used the term "eternal life," which is wonderfully to be desired. It would be a blessing to know that we had passed the test for everlasting life.

Notice that God, who "cannot lie," made this promise "ages ago." A long, long time ago, God promised the hope of eternal life, but to whom and when? Ephesians 1:4,5 provides the answers: "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world [before Adam was created], that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the

good pleasure of his will.” Therefore, in God’s mind even before the foundation of the world, not only was the Lamb slain, but also the Church was chosen in Christ. God wanted a divine family, so He predestinated a class to be conformed to the image of His Son (Rom. 8:29).

For an infinity of time, God was alone, and His plan was secret, known only to Him. But the very fact that, in time, He created Jesus shows He had hopes and ideas with regard to that Son and a divine family. This class was predestined from time immemorial because God intended to bring *many* sons to glory.

The fact God promised the hope of eternal life to Jesus’ followers shows that while long ago He had premeditated a divine family, He also, somewhere along the line, first disclosed His purpose to Jesus. Thus, before Jesus came down here as a human being at the First Advent, he knew what his mission was, but when was his mission made known?

The angels shouted for joy at seeing the creation of a perfect man, a tiny physical being in God’s image. But imagine their consternation when sin entered and Adam fell! We think, however, that God disclosed this information to Jesus *prior to Adam’s fall*. God gradually confided in Jesus, telling His foreknowledge of man’s sin and also part of the plan of recovery through the payment of the ransom price. The Father would have asked His Son, “Would you be willing to go on this mission of mercy?” A possible negation of this thinking might seem to be that Isaac did not know he was to be the sacrifice until the last moment. However, the fact that in coming to earth, Jesus did not get knowledge of his preexistence until the heavens opened to him at his baptism at age 30 could be the parallel, rather than having no prior knowledge of the purpose until that time. Following his baptism, Jesus immediately went into the wilderness to reflect on and pray about what the Father had previously disclosed to him. He wanted to program his life and perform his ministry according to his Father’s will.

Titus 1:3 But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour;

God “hath in due times [plural] manifested his word through preaching.” The King James harmonizes with the Sinaitic Manuscript, which has “times” (plural). The manifestation had occurred previously on multiple occasions, for at different times, the information was gradually disclosed. However, when Paul came along, he was charged with the responsibility of giving more explicit instruction and fuller enlightenment. Jesus had said to his disciples, “I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now” (John 16:12). God commanded Paul to make known some of this information in a very pertinent manner.

Pieces of information were disclosed *gradually* down through the dispensations. For example, Enoch prophesied concerning the Second Advent that the Lord would come “with ten thousands of his saints” (Jude 14). Hence Enoch, who “walked with God,” knew a lot more than the Bible reveals about him (Gen. 5:22). Moses knew about the sufferings of Christ and was willing to suffer for the cause of Messiah in advance of the First Advent (Heb. 11:24-26). Abraham saw “my [Jesus’] day” and rejoiced (John 8:56). Also, he and other Ancient Worthies “died in faith” and endured sufferings with the hope of a “better country, that is, an heavenly [resurrection]” (Heb. 11:10,13,16). To repeat, the Ancient Worthies had a *spiritual* hope, to be realized ultimately, at the conclusion of the Millennial Age. Of course they will start out with a better resurrection at the beginning of the Kingdom Age, in that they will be perfect bodily beings, but at the end of the Millennium, all of mankind who get life will also be perfect. Therefore, the better resurrection of the Ancient Worthies will logically be a change to spirit nature at that time as an additional reward. The term “camp of the saints” suggests that the Ancient Worthies will have another residence, a *more permanent abode*, elsewhere at that time (Rev. 20:9).

Therefore, God's manifesting His word "in due times" through preaching means that just as Enoch prophesied *before* the Flood, so others prophesied *after* the Flood—but *piecemeal*, in dribs and drabs. Now Paul came along and said that he had been charged with the responsibility to enlarge the faith and understanding of Christians on these matters.

"Which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour." Paul was "commanded" to preach in connection with seeing Jesus as "one born out of due time" and the sending of Ananias to partially restore his eyesight (Acts 9:1-20; 1 Cor. 15:8). God told Ananias that Paul was chosen to preach before kings, Gentiles, and Jews, and the apostle subsequently received instruction from Ananias.

Titus 1:4 To Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.

"To Titus, mine own son [*child*—see RSV] after the common faith." "Child" seems to be the proper thought, suggesting that Titus was converted after hearing Paul. The term "common faith" is the high calling and thus is a proof that the "common salvation" of Jude 3 is also the high calling.

"Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour." Most new translations properly omit the word "mercy." The *Diaglott* contains "mercy," but it was supplied from a later manuscript. Incidentally, in the *Diaglott*, part of Timothy and all of Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, and Revelation are supplied from later manuscripts.

Titus 1:5 For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:

When did Paul leave Titus on the island of Crete? Paul's ministry in Crete took place on one of his boat trips before his first imprisonment when he was en route to Rome. Titus accompanied him on part of the journey.

Paul had instructed Titus what to do in connection with the ministry. Titus was to further establish the believers in Crete; he was to "set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city."

Q: In what way did Titus "ordain elders"?

A: Since the class was new, Titus would have *suggested* who the elders should be. As discussed in the *Sixth Volume*, voting for elders and deacons takes place with the outstretched hand, but with a new class, the brethren did not know the scriptural method for selecting elders. Thus they needed suggestions and fraternal guidance, and they needed to see the necessity for order in the ecclesia. At first, on a temporary basis, Titus could have suggested chairmen as leaders. Then, after a while, when the class got organized and became familiar with one another's background, he would have suggested elders and explained the voting procedure to be used. Therefore, after some time had passed, the class would have held a regular election, voting with the outstretched hand. Incidentally, when Titus forsook Paul and went to Dalmatia, that province was far, far away from Crete.

Titus 1:6 If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly.

Titus 1:7 For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon

angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;

Titus 1:8 But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate;

Titus 1:9 Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

Earlier Paul had said to Titus, “I left you behind with the purpose of establishing leadership in the classes in the various cities in Crete.” Now Paul was writing in a more particularized sense, for as the classes developed, more was expected. To faithfully discharge their responsibility, elders would have to be exemplary Christians in both doctrine and character. In other words, they would have to be above average in every respect. In leadership, elders should be neither dictatorial (the Nicolaitan spirit—Rev. 2:6,15) nor democratic (the opposite, where everyone has his say regardless). For both elders and those being instructed, the primary objective should *always* be to *learn how to do God’s will*.

The qualifications for eldership are also listed in 1 Timothy 3:2-7, and they are very similar to verses 6-9 above. “A bishop [elder] then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.”

Q: One qualification in the 1 Timothy listing that is missing in Titus is being “apt to teach.” Is there a reason for the omission?

A: Verse 9 covers the “apt to teach” qualification for elders, namely, “Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.” An elder should be able to convince the gainsayers (the opposers) and teach truth. It is one thing to negate the argument of another person, but it is another thing to be able to both negate the argument and constructively reply. One can say, “No, you are wrong because of such and such,” but in addition, he should be able to explain what is right. It is not a matter of just being critical or exposing error but of being able to teach truth.

The thought is, “Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught [*by the Word*].” In other words, a person may know that certain things are right or wrong according to what the *Bible* teaches but then, later on, have his *own* ideas, which are not scripturally supported. One must be careful when that happens, for a person’s life and doctrine should be scripturally supported. As we proceed in this epistle, we will see that Paul showed what the dangers are.

Titus 1:10 For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision:

Titus 1:11 Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake.

There were many unruly, vain-talking deceivers among the Jewish proselytes to Christianity, whose mouths *had to be stopped*. They were trying to weave in the requirement that one must be a Jew as well as a Christian and thus be under the Law. Ceremonial works were stressed in addition to faith. Many brethren think it is unchristian to stop someone’s mouth, yet Paul was telling Titus, who *was not an apostle*, to do that very thing. Doctrines that are pernicious and

damaging to true Christianity should be *boldly* opposed and stopped, not democratically debated. One should not be timid about opposing a harmful doctrine, nor should such a doctrine be tolerated. Rather, it should be stopped in its tracks. Paul was saying that these men should be bridled, muzzled, controlled, and kept in their place. The thought is not to reject them but to keep them from monopolizing the meeting.

Unruly, vain-talking deceivers and/or pernicious doctrines can “subvert whole houses.” From a practical standpoint, how did this subverting take place in the early Church? Many ecclesia meetings were held in private homes, and most in attendance were families, households, and related brethren. In fact, the word “houses” has the thought of “households,” “relatives,” and “kin.” Hence evil doctrines influenced many in an ecclesia and sometimes an *entire* ecclesia.

From a positive standpoint, when Cornelius was converted, his entire family was baptized plus friends and neighbors. From a negative standpoint, if the head of a household is deceived, his thinking will probably affect a number of individuals. In some cases, when one deflects, the whole family does likewise.

Unruly, vain-talking deceivers teach “things which they ought not [damaging doctrines], for filthy lucre’s sake.” “Filthy lucre” includes prestige, power, influence, honor, and recognition as well as money. For example, some Christian Jews cleverly wove in the Law to teach tithing, granting excess hospitality, paying the traveling and lodging expenses of others, etc., etc. They taught that Christians should be generous, give liberally, and open their homes to elders, but these unruly, deceiving leaders were reaping the benefits themselves.

Under the Law, the priesthood was supported by the people, so various religious groups in our day say that the Christian is obligated to tithe his income. In fact, one tactic is to give free booklets to new interests and then require followers not only to tithe but also to pay a double (20 percent) tithe on certain occasions.

In antitype, the Jewish Law primarily teaches the work of the Church in the *next* age, that is, in the Kingdom Age. At that time, a member of the Little Flock who helps one come into relationship with God will get a blessing, for he will have the satisfaction of bringing a soul to God and seeing a sincere consecration. As a reward, he will get the antitypical “hide of the animal” to his credit. Stated another way, in the Kingdom Age, the Church will get rewards from the people.

Titus 1:12 One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies.

One of the Cretans’ own prophets had said that all Cretans were “liars, evil beasts, slow bellies.” In verse 10, Paul pointed out “specially they of the circumcision,” that is, Jewish Christians who were in Crete. Then he quoted a famous saying about unfavorable character traits of Cretans. Today such a statement would be called *racial discrimination!*

The term “slow bellies” is another way of saying that Cretans were slothful. This class of Jewish Christians on Crete—this unruly element—was not exempt from the description. They were identifying with Christianity not for what they could *give* God or how they could *serve* Him but for what they could *get*. They wanted to be recipients of favors and did not want to extend themselves to help others. To be called “liars” is also a strong charge.

Another nationality might be known for a hot temper, but if this weakness is kept under Christian control, that very flame and fire can be a blessing. Similarly, the explosive influence of combustion in an automobile is brought under control to drive the car. Thus, although

unfavorable national traits are weaknesses, if they are under the discipline of the Holy Spirit, they can work out for good.

Comment: Jews are called “stiffnecked” in the Bible, but if they can set their minds to obey God with the same determination, that trait becomes an asset (Exod. 32:9).

Reply: Yes, the Holy Spirit is a regulator that, with our allowance, submission, and cooperation, can control unpleasant characteristics so that they become a blessing to others.

Titus 1:13 This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith;

Notice, “*rebuke them sharply.*” This statement is in Scripture, yet many would look askance at one who justifiably rebuked sharply. Jesus’ ministry was filled with rebukes, criticisms, and faultfinding, yet today the tendency is to be loving, kind, and soft-spoken. Here Paul told Titus that the mouths of this unruly element must be stopped and that he was to rebuke them sharply. However, sharp rebuking should be done *dispassionately* with a *powerful Scripture* in order to eliminate the possibility of a return rebuke and of the individual’s taking the rebuke personally.

To rebuke sharply under proper circumstances is an evidence of love for God. If we love Him and His Word and want to be instructed, this is part of the responsibility of a Christian. Therefore, love forgives, but it also rebukes. The point of the rebuke was to help the erring ones be “*sound in the faith.*” In other words, the rebuke was *constructive*. It was strong and sharp, but it was not meant to be taken personally. The purpose was to instruct the unruly element in knowledge and in faith so that they would be correctly informed and made aware of their deviation from the proper course.

Titus 1:14 Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth.

Verse 14 sounds like Paul’s first letter to Timothy, which cautions against fables (myths) and endless genealogies (1 Tim. 1:4; 4:7). With regard to traditions, such as are in the Talmud, Jesus said, “Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition” (Matt. 15:6). *Mechanical*, prearranged ceremonial traditions, like washing the hands, have a *form of godliness* but are not godly (Matt. 15:2,3). These are commandments of men and not specifications in the Word of God. Certain traditions may have some value, but when they are systematized teachings and are done in a ritualistic manner, the godliness is only a form. Stated another way, ritualistic teaching and practices are formalism. More time and attention were being given to man-made teachings than to the explicit Word of God.

With regard to “Jewish fables,” rabbis love to tell stories and give illustrations. Sometimes we do likewise and Jesus spoke in parables, but we must use stories *carefully* and *sparingly*—and they *must harmonize* with the Word of God. It is nice to use stories occasionally as instruction in certain principles of Scripture, but they must be judiciously chosen lest we become a storyteller instead of a preacher of the Word of God. Many in the nominal system habitually tell stories, and that is a method we must guard against.

Comment: The nominal Church has daily readings with a Scripture text for each day that are somewhat comparable to our *Daily Heavenly Manna*, but instead of just discussing the principle behind the Scripture, the commentary is a little story about a football player or something else with a worldly aspect as an illustration.

Reply: Philosophizing has its place, but it must be carefully done. As a *practice* of teaching, it is wrong.

The Talmud was given more attention than the Pentateuch and the Torah. And Catholic catechisms are as ritualistic as the Talmud. Both are *manufactured* theology. Moreover, “fables” are a Judaizing type of theorizing.

Many think it is dangerous to study genealogies or types and say we should study only simple subjects such as justification by faith. It is further alleged that brethren should be careful in studying prophecy. Thus there are two different extremes, both of which are incorrect.

Titus 1:15 **Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.**

What bearing does verse 15 have on the context?

Comment: If the Cretans were liars and slothful, then this unruly, vain-talking, deceiving Jewish Christian element would be susceptible to these evil traits, for they lived on Crete. One who is given to these traits doubts the word of others. He tends to be suspicious and ascribes impure motives to others, including God, Jesus, the apostles, and the brethren.

Reply: The Living Bible takes certain liberties, but it is stated a little stronger: “A person who is pure of heart sees goodness and purity in everything; but a person whose own heart is evil and untrusting finds evil in everything.”

In their teaching, the scribes and Pharisees laid heavy burdens on the people, emphasizing every jot and tittle. The effect of their rules and rituals was destructive and critical. Nothing was constructive. They took advantage of people by magnifying their imperfections and thus caused discouragement. One who himself is a liar looks suspiciously at others. It is true that we live in an ungodly world where much fault can be found, but something is wrong if we do not see any goodness.

Titus 1:16 **They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.**

The unruly, vain-talking, deceiving class, who were especially of the circumcision, professed to know God, but their works denied Him. Just being a Jew and having a background in the Law and the Scriptures did not make one a better Christian than a Gentile, who had no background in Scripture. Jews who felt they were superior Christians because of their background were doing the teaching when, in fact, they were falling far short themselves. This element was “void of judgment” (see King James margin).

Comment: The counterpart of these admonitions to the early Church has applied in principle to Catholicism down through the Gospel Age—and still applies today.

Reply: There are many similarities between the Jewish and the Catholic religions. For example, formalism, artificially creating a holy mood with candles, repetitious prayers, peculiar dress for the leaders, and traditions are all parallel evils. Ceremonial works are plentiful but are not “good work[s].”

Man-made rules concerning works come under this denunciation. One example would be the requirement to sell or distribute a certain number of books or tracts. In regard to works, we should rejoice in the prospering of the Lord’s cause, putting as little emphasis as possible on the

personalities who are involved. What each Christian does should be between the Lord and the individual, the principle being, “When thou doest alms [or prayers or good works], let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth” (Matt. 6:3).

Titus 2:1 But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine:

“Sound doctrine” is related to *Christian living*, as opposed to the knowledge of other doctrines. Both are important, but the emphasis here is on practical Christian living. Verse 1 is an all-embrasive statement: “But speak thou the things which become *sound* doctrine [that is, wholesome, holy Christian living].” This counsel for healthy, stable conduct nourishes and builds up the Christian. A variety of spiritual foods are in the Christian diet—food that strengthens and helps the new creature to grow, food that is pleasurable like desserts, food that meets a need at a particular time, etc. The bread, meat, and potatoes of the Word are all required for proper growth and strength.

Paul addressed the letter to Titus, and thus basically to teachers and elders, who are to pass this *wholesome instruction* on to others. Generalities are stressed here, not specific advice for a particular need. The sound advice of this chapter is broken down into five basic categories: (1) aged men, (2) aged women, (3) young women, (4) young men, and (5) servants.

When certain untoward circumstances arose, such as not properly partaking of the Memorial, *Christian common sense* was needed in order to eliminate problems that could be damaging in the long run. This type of advice is basic for *all* Christians throughout the Gospel Age.

Titus 2:2 That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience.

Aged men are to be “sober, grave, temperate, [and] sound in faith, in charity, [and] in patience.” Why did Paul give this advice to the older, more mature brothers? Because of their experience, they should have learned these things and thus been able to teach and influence others accordingly. Similarly, a father teaches a child in the natural family. Since the brothers were older, they should have learned certain things in life so that they could be a good example to younger brethren.

The following are from various translations:

“Be sober [vigilant—marginal reading], grave, temperate” (King James).

“Be temperate, serious, sensible” (Revised Standard).

“Be reserved, dignified, moderate” (Jerusalem Bible).

The three words are closely related in meaning in both the Greek and the English. In this case, it is better not to try to pinpoint the exact meaning of each word, for even the Bible scholars have differences. Generally speaking, older brothers should be dignified, prudent, moderate, vigilant, level-headed, earnest, reserved, and serious—and not light, frivolous, excitable, and given to telling jokes. Overall in the epistle, Paul was trying to show the influence that a person has *upon others*, but the nitty-gritty details pertain *to the individual*, for how can one be an example to others unless he has brought himself under self-control?

Comment: The word “sober” (or a variation) is used three times in verses 2, 4, and 6 with different marginal meanings.

Reply: Yes, these words overlap and cannot be pinned down too specifically. Instead we should consider the *general tenor* of thought.

In verse 1, Paul instructed Titus to speak “sound doctrine” *to others*. Then, starting with verse 2,

the *individuals themselves* were given advice by Paul. Thus each Christian should especially heed the advice for his or her own category.

Older brethren should be “sound” in three areas that are grouped together: faith, charity (love), and patience. First, we will consider the term “sound in faith.”

In this context, being “sound in faith” is closely related to being “sound in doctrine.” *Knowledge* is needed for *true faith*, for faith is not credulity. Not only is faith the belief in God that He exists and that He is the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him, but it comes by hearing the Word of God (Heb. 11:6; Rom. 10:17).

Comment: According to the *Diaglott*, “sound doctrine” in verse 1 is “*wholesome instruction.*”

Reply: Yes, and being “sound in faith” is to have “*wholesome belief.*” Thus doctrine and faith are closely related here, with just a slight nuance of difference.

Comment: Jude wrote, “It was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). In that text, doctrine and faith are closely related.

How would a Christian be “sound in patience”? First, he needs to understand what kind of “patience” Paul was referring to. Most people think that one should always be cultured, well-behaved, and dignified and that impatience is not Christlike. However, the definition of “patience,” like that of “love,” is very comprehensive in the Bible. For example, “In your *patience* possess ye your souls” (Luke 21:19). That type of “patience” has nothing to do with one little act of rash words due to lack of sleep, ill health, or another type of physical condition whereby a person does something he would not do under normal circumstances. Rather, the thought is of “*patient endurance,*” which means that we are not to give up the spiritual warfare or renounce our faith. We are to press on and continue the *endurance* race. We should arrange and discipline our training for the *long* race by pacing ourselves because taking up our cross to follow Jesus is a *lifetime* contract, not a hundred-yard dash. Unless we school and regulate ourselves for the *marathon* race, we will get discouraged. *Persevere* is the thought.

Some Christians run almost by sight, constantly looking for evidences from the Lord. When evidences do not come right away, they are disappointed and after a while depart from the way. Therefore, “sound[ness] in patience” with regard to self, as well as in giving advice to others, is keeping the *overall* aspect in mind and not thinking short-term.

Comment: This principle can be extended to soundness in faith and love as well, for they are also comprehensive subjects.

Reply: Yes. *Principled love* is not an emotional feeling, and *true faith* is belief in what *God* has said and in what *He* promises to do. But sometimes what He says and what He will do are predicated on certain things that we must do. After all, how can we rely on a promise of God if we are not keeping the conditions of that promise? Therefore, a soundness of faith means that we understand what God says on a given subject and what He expects of us.

The same principle applies to love, for “sound[ness] in love” is Godlikeness—it is *being like God*. Sometimes He gets angry, and sometimes He is patient. Hence we must study to be sure that we understand the concept and examples of love as taught in *His Word* and regulate our perspective accordingly. Otherwise, our concept of love will be warped. Most people believe that love means to think nicely of others, but there are times when to do so would encourage a person in wrongdoing. Love should be firm at times and merciful at other times depending on

the circumstance. We must study the Word long and diligently in order to know how to react in a given situation. We want to know when pity, forgiveness, and mercy can be exercised.

Comment: Justice, the foundation of love, is a determining factor of when to be soft and when to be firm. Justice should not be violated.

Titus 2:3 The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things;

The characteristics of verse 2 for older men apply “likewise” (also) to older women. In addition, they should be “not given to much wine.” Older women were cautioned not to take too much wine, for even in moderation, wine tends to loosen the tongue and make one garrulous, and a loose tongue can lead to careless behavior. Also, a glass of wine would detract from a meeting by making one happy and joyful when the subject matter could be very serious. Verse 3 is not teaching total abstinence, however, for a wedding, for example, is a different atmosphere, and Timothy was told to take “a little wine for ... [his] stomach’s sake” (1 Tim. 5:23).

An elder should not be “given to wine,” but he certainly could partake of wine as an emblem at the Memorial (1 Tim. 3:3). With a deacon, the requirement is a little less stringent, for he should not be “given to much wine” (1 Tim. 3:8). In other words, the taking of wine is to be done with great moderation. Older men and women should be similar to deacons in their deportment, especially in regard to wine. The higher up one is in influence, the more moderate, temperate, and stringent he should be in partaking of wine. Stated another way, the higher up one is, the more he should restrict his liberties along these lines. An elder has the most responsibility, a deacon is next, and older men and women are almost on a level with deacons in their comportment.

Aged women are to “be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things.” Let us consider the term “false accusers,” which means “slanderers.”

Q: Would we say that most of these instructions apply to *all* categories (old and young men and old and young women) but *more specifically* to the particular category in which they are listed? For example, aged women had more leisure time and thus were more prone to evil speaking.

A: Yes, that is the thought. All categories of brethren should avoid slander, but Paul was saying that aged women should especially be on guard against this evil. When brethren are busy for the Lord and in spiritual activities and studies, there is not as much time for gossip.

Two guidelines are helpful in avoiding false accusations. (1) We should not jump to hasty conclusions. (2) We should search out a matter and not accept gossip or second- or third-hand reports. The matter may be stated with definiteness yet be garbled. We may try to apply proper principles, but if the original premise is wrong, the principles may not be pertinent.

We are speaking about *general* rules, but there are exceptions based on other Scriptures. For example, there are circumstances when a dangerous teacher of doctrine should be pointed out—but his evil must be established; that is, the practice must be *publicly* done and known. Otherwise, to discuss the matter would be evil speaking. We should point out an evil only when it is *necessary* in order to prevent *further* evil. In other words, sometimes it is necessary to speak evil concerning a person because of the damage that would be done by remaining silent, but even then, telling the matter to others should be grievous to us. However, most gossip is not necessary and could even damage the ministry of a brother or sister.

As practicing judges in the present life, we should *weigh* facts, circumstances, and conduct. We are to be reasonable, sensible, patient, merciful, thoughtful, etc., and to consider the temperament of the individuals who are involved in a problem.

Q: Aged women are to be “teachers of good things.” What are some examples?

A: As mothers, older sisters can teach manners, respect, courtesy, cleanliness, being helpful, etc.—practical things—to children and younger people. For instance, some mothers do not correct a child who gets too familiar with adults, calling them by their first name. For example, the adult’s name should be preceded by “Uncle,” “Brother,” or some other term of address. And older sisters can give discreet and sound advice, especially on an individual basis.

Verses 4 and 5 elaborate on the “teaching” aspect. More is expected of an “aged” person who has been long in the way of truth and thus is more advanced. An older sister can pass along her experience to young sisters.

Titus 2:4 That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children,

Titus 2:5 To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

The counsel to older women continues, listing some areas of acceptable teaching. Older sisters can teach the younger women “to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, [so] that the word of God be not blasphemed.” The Revised Standard reads, “And so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be sensible, chaste, domestic, kind, and submissive to their husbands, that the word of God may not be discredited.”

In teaching young women to be “keepers at home [domestic],” the older sisters should encourage them to be good wives and mothers and to provide a proper home atmosphere. Sisters who have children have a responsibility not only in raising them but also in being sensible, reasonable, and moderate. In addition, there is a responsibility toward the husband.

Notice that all categories—men and women, young and old—are urged to be sober, earnest, serious, and prudent. The counsel sounds almost like qualifications for elders and deacons. In other words, all Christians should aim for these characteristics, generally speaking, but we should be sure that the elders and deacons we elect in our own ecclesia have them.

Comment: If women followed the advice given here about being good wives and mothers, the Word of God would not be “blasphemed,” and much debate and trouble with regard to striving for equality through women’s liberation movements would cease.

Titus 2:6 Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded.

Titus 2:7 In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity,

Titus 2:8 Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.

Verses 7 and 8 were especially directed to Titus personally.

Comment: Verses 6-8 read as follows in the Revised Standard Version: “Likewise urge the younger men to control themselves. Show yourself in all respects a model of good deeds, and in your teaching show integrity, gravity, and sound speech that cannot be censured, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say of us.”

“Sound speech, that cannot be condemned.” These pastoral letters do not stress doctrine such as the covenants, chronology, the reign, etc., but *wholesome living*.

Titus 2:9 Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again;

Titus 2:10 Not purloining, but showing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

Verses 9 and 10 deal with the master-servant relationship. This subject could be touchy, but if Paul had not written on it, servants would have gotten out of hand. They would have felt, “As Christians, we have liberty, so we are free,” and that would have been especially true if a Christian servant had a Christian master. Paul’s advice elsewhere was that the two should not separate, for the relationship still existed. This advice is contrary to the thinking of today.

“Not purloining” means “not stealing.” Employees and servants are to obey their employer and master, respectively, and not be contentious or steal from him. If a servant feels his master is not giving him his due, he should not steal little things, thinking, “I earned them, so they are part of my compensation.” And many feel justified in pilfering from their employer because they think their wages are too low.

“Not answering again.” Not answering back is another requirement for the Christian. In other words, one can develop Christian character and traits by obeying unjust demands as long as principle and religious scruples and practices are not violated. One must be subservient to humiliating circumstances that are not contrary to conscience with God.

However, if an employer is unjust, we do have liberty to present a line of reasoning in an unemotional, noncontentious way. If a condition is intolerable, it would be better to leave and work elsewhere than to stay and be a chronic grumbler and discontent. Of course back in Paul’s day, a Christian who was a personal slave did not have the liberty to leave.

Comment: Nominal religious leaders should not incite people to demand “rights” but should obey this counsel.

Reply: They should not stir up strife and issues that are foreign to true ministers of the Word. Such matters will be handled in the Kingdom. Occasionally, there is a cause that we can properly identify with, but we should not make a habit of championing worldly causes.

If Christianity were identified with troublemaking, a reproach would be brought on the religion. For instance, it would be wrong for Christians to feel they were above being servants because they were called to be kings and priests. Thus Christians have to control themselves.

“Servants [were] to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things ... [so] that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.” Notice that Jehovah is the Savior in this verse. If we are living properly as a Christian, we will honor God by our lives regardless of station (servant, rich, poor, etc.).

Titus 2:11 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,

Why did Paul say that the grace of God has appeared for the salvation of all men? What relationship does verse 11 have to what was previously discussed? The thought is, “For the grace of God will *ultimately, in due time*, bring salvation to all who are now serving under unjust masters.” If we suffer slavery or injustice in the present life, our characters will be developed for good. By God’s grace, true freedom will come eventually. Suffering is part of our training.

Titus 2:12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

Titus 2:13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

Verses 11-13 contrast the present life with the future. Living godly, soberly, and righteously in the present life will ultimately work out for good for us if we obey God and curtail certain emotions, thoughts, and feelings. If we obey the counsel of God in the present life and are subject to the powers that be, it will work out well for us, for we look forward to being with God and Jesus. We are waiting for the future reward and blessing that will come through the exercise of curtailing certain emotions.

We look “for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” Trinitarians like verse 13, for they say it proves that God and Jesus are one. The term “great God” has to be either Jehovah or a reference to Jesus as the mighty God. Which is it? The “great God” is *Jehovah*. In the future, in the “glorious appearing [*epiphania*],” we hope to see *both* God (Jehovah) and Jesus. In the present life, we are subject to the powers that be, but we look forward to a future life in which we will be identified with both God and Jesus beyond the veil. When the *epiphania* of Jesus occurs to the *world*, the faithful consecrated of the Gospel Age will be in heaven. In the present life, we *look for* the “blessed hope,” and the *realization* of that hope will occur beyond the veil if we are faithful. We hope to meet the Bridegroom and to be escorted to God in the throne room.

Titus 2:14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

This verse, which is a continuation of verse 13, applies to Jesus and what he did for *us*. Jesus “gave himself for *us*, that he might redeem *us* from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”

What does the term “peculiar people” mean in this context? Paul’s advice to men, women, and servants seems peculiar and very out of place to human nature today—as it did even back in the apostle’s day. Hence if we follow Paul’s advice in this chapter, we will be considered peculiar. For example, women are to be submissive to their husbands. An employee should not retort sharply to an unreasonable request by an employer. Women are not to expect to be equal to men in the business world. And the fact that we would not champion civil rights, vote, fight with carnal weapons, etc., marks us as peculiar. We are considered unduly subservient because we are not revolutionary-minded. Our hope centers in the *future* Kingdom, not the present life. Paul’s advice is contrary to worldly advice.

We are to be zealous in “good works,” which include character development that results from following the advice here. Social work is generally considered Christian work, but good works are testifying and witnessing the truth. Following Paul’s advice is a work, an effort, to qualify to become one of the chosen in the next age.

Titus 2:15 These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.

Verse 15, which is very instructive, is especially addressed to Titus, who was an *elder*, not an apostle. Paul told him (and thus all elders) to speak, exhort, and rebuke on these subjects “with all authority,” that is, by the Word of God. In other words, there are times when elders should *rebuke*. The rebuking emphasized here is on *daily living* matters (and not on doctrine, as is usually done).

Paul’s advice to Timothy was similar. However, it is important to learn what and what not to rebuke. If the apostles were on the scene in our day, they would find much to rebuke, yet today it is almost considered un-Christlike to do so. Brethren would recognize the need for a rebuke if they were all sympathetic to the issue, but the rebuke of Scripture is based on what *God* thinks, and not on what others think. What He considers worthy of rebuke, others think is immaterial, generally speaking.

Paul said to Titus, “Let no man despise thee.” And he said similarly to Timothy, “Let no man despise thy youth” (1 Tim. 4:12).

Comment: One problem today is the refusal of an ecclesia to hold a class trial when a situation warrants it. When nothing is done, the facts are not revealed, and brethren not only consider the mention of a grievous sin to be evil speaking but sympathize with the sinner.

Reply: Having a trial would be a problem in a very small class, and a large class usually does not want a trial along the lines of Christian living (“sound doctrine”—Titus 1:9; 2:1).

Comment: The Lord must be very displeased when the problems of immorality among the consecrated are hidden.

Reply: Sometimes a problem that occurred many years ago is uncovered at a very late date. Either the ones who were involved are dead, or it would cause more harm now to dig up something so far removed in the past. However, current situations are very important, and they can be corrected if proper actions are taken.

Comment: If a serious matter occurred that we knew should be brought up before the class, but the elders refused to consider the matter, calling it evil speaking, the only recourse we would have is to leave that ecclesia.

Reply: That is correct, and the leaving would be taking a stand for principle.

In the *Reprints*, the Pastor spoke strongly in places, even naming certain individuals. The personality aspect is not addressed in the *Volumes*, for they treat subject matter. The *Reprints*, which consist of articles that were written monthly, deal with problems that arose. For example, the Pastor named an individual, whose reasoning he said was unsound. And the Bible itself names some individuals (1 Tim. 1:20; 3 John 9,10).

Comment: Many brethren may not have read the stronger articles in the *Reprints*. Those who have read them may do so intellectually, but then, when a sin of immorality occurs with a brother or sister in Christ who is a close friend or relative, emotionalism takes over and the proper stand is not taken. Such emotionalism is not principled love.

Titus 3:1 Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to

be ready to every good work,

We should keep in mind that this epistle was addressed to Titus as an *elder*. Hence Paul was giving advice on how Titus (and other elders) should instruct brethren.

“Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates.” The oldest manuscripts mention only two categories, which, put simply, are rulers and their representatives. In other words, Christians are to be subject not only to high officials and dignitaries but also to their representatives. Moreover, Christians are “to be ready to [perform] every good work.”

Titus 3:2 To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men.

Christians are not to be “brawlers”; that is, we are not to be quarrelsome or contentious on nonessential points. We can discuss and reason on delicate issues, but we should be careful not to carry the matter too far.

Also, Christians should “speak evil of no man ... [but be] gentle, showing all meekness unto all men.” The reason for not doing these things is given in verse 3.

Titus 3:3 For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.

Paul’s basic line of reasoning for following the guidelines for good conduct is that we had these characteristics *before* consecration. After conversion, we should have changed *radically*, so that we are no longer contentious, speaking evil, “foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.”

Titus 3:4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,

Titus 3:5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

Since God’s kindness, love, and mercy were extended to us, we should try to emulate His disposition and thus, in turn, do the same to others in the hope that they will change. Why did Paul next say that God did not deal with us because of any “works of righteousness” we did prior to the time He called us? In the Lord’s sight, *none* are righteous before being reckoned so through Christ (Rom. 3:10). Therefore, calling attention to our life prior to consecration has some value in the sense of reminding us that not only did we once do the things mentioned in verse 3 (and hence had plenty of faults), but it was only through God’s kindness, love, and mercy that we were called—and not because we were righteous. When properly appraised, “all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags” (Isa. 64:6).

Again Paul called God “our Saviour,” but why did he call both God and Jesus “our Saviour”? (See Titus 2:10,13.) There was a question as to whether Titus and Timothy should be circumcised. Because Timothy was Jewish, Paul suggested that he be circumcised (although the act was not mandatory) to eliminate unnecessary faultfinding by Jewish brethren. However, Paul adamantly refused to have Titus circumcised because for him to do so under pressure from Jewish brethren would give credence to the wrong thought that a Christian had to obey the Law as well as Christ. The backgrounds of Timothy and Titus were different. (Incidentally, the implication is that Timothy had not been circumcised as a babe, and circumcision is more humiliating when done to an older male.)

Because of this issue, it was necessary for Paul to emphasize that *both* God and Jesus are our Savior. The Jews had no trouble seeing that God is the Savior, but recognizing Jesus in that role was another matter. Paul wanted the brethren to see the necessity of recognizing the involvement of both God and Jesus with the plan of redemption.

What is the “washing of regeneration”? “Regeneration” means rebirth. God saved us by rebirth and the renewal of the Holy Spirit. There is a contrast between the *unholy* spirit that operated within us before we consecrated and the *Holy* Spirit afterwards.

How is baptism the water of rebirth? The water is a symbol of *death*, and the individual symbolizing his consecration is lifted out of the water to a *new life*. Thus water baptism, the water of regeneration, is a *symbol* of rebirth. Henceforth we walk in newness of life as a new creature (Rom. 6:4; 2 Cor. 5:17).

The “renewing” of the Holy Spirit means that after consecration, all things are seen in a different light. All things are now new. The motivating power that energizes us after consecration is a *new life* as *new* creatures with a *new* outlook.

Titus 3:6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;

The word “abundantly” is not quite the thought in this context. Translators are roughly evenly divided, but “generously” is more accurate, as in the Jerusalem Bible and the New International Version, for Paul was emphasizing the attitude and *motivation* of God. Emotion and principle are involved, not just quantity and possession, as the words “plentifully,” “richly,” and “abundantly” signify. God shed on us *generously* the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ our Savior. In other words, if Christians have been generously dealt with by God, they should be prone to be magnanimous toward others—where principle is not violated.

Titus 3:7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Verses 1-6 are more pertinent along a certain line—being subject to rulers, not being quarrelsome, being submissive, doing good works, and being generous—because we have been blessed of the Lord. Now verse 7 adds the thought of *grace*. In addition to God’s love, kindness, mercy, and generosity, Paul emphasized God’s grace. In wanting to understand a subject, we should try to get the gist of the apostle’s reasoning before going into too much detail, or we will miss the overall lesson.

Titus 3:8 This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.

Paul told Titus to affirm “these things” *constantly* so that those who have believed in God will “be careful to maintain good works.” Verse 8 suggests that at this particular period of Paul’s life, some brethren were having problems with the temporal powers. They were combative and argumentative and spoke disparagingly about the authorities. No doubt their criticisms were true in most cases, for a lot of injustice existed back there, just like today. However, dwelling too much on the corruption will be unprofitable to us as new creatures. The news media continually amplifies the faults of others. If we feed on and enter into that type of reasoning, it will destroy our development as new creatures. Not only should we not feed on injustices, but we should be careful not to, in turn, feed others with the same type of thinking. As much as

possible, Christians should avoid involvement in such matters.

Titus 3:9 But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain.

Notice the things that are to be avoided: foolish questions, genealogies, and contentions, such as strivings about the Law. The word “questions” is a poor translation. Christians are to steer clear of foolish and pointless speculations and controversies.

It is essential to understand this verse in order to know what kind of “heretic” to reject (see verse 10), for if we act strongly against someone on a wrong basis, we would be guilty of committing an injustice, developing a wrong attitude, and violating the Word. When a certain activity or issue is going on in an ecclesia, it is always well to stand back and ask, “If I get involved, what will my involvement *lead to*?” After answering that question, we should then ask, “Is it *worthwhile*?”

In order to avoid controversy, many steer clear of *all* such issues and discussions. Their attitude is that it will only lead to a lot of words, and we do not want trouble of any kind. However, that extreme is not the proper thought either. Such brethren do see what the issue will lead to—more and more discussion—but if the issue is *worthwhile*, they err in not pursuing it and getting involved.

When a *principle* is involved, or if in the final analysis the issue is *important*, the matter is worth entering into. The foolishness or the necessity of getting involved is determined by the importance of the issue. Conversely, if the issue is unimportant or if a principle is not at stake, we should not get involved, for involvement would then be unprofitable and vain.

Paul’s Epistle to Titus considers only the negative aspect of involvement, but elsewhere the thought of questioning comes up on a variety of subjects. We should enter into important issues such as contending for the faith (Jude 3). The point is that there are *two* sides to involvement. As a guideline, we should always *weigh* the importance of an issue or subject before getting involved. Is it important enough to devote consecrated time and effort? Is it important enough to get into disputes and arguments?

Genealogies could become an issue if some thought it mattered whether or not a Christian was a Jew, which happened frequently in the early Church. Today genealogy could become an issue if, for example, *undue* deference was shown to an individual just because his father was many years in the truth. A clique could develop and/or an improper weight of authority because of the length of time an individual or his forebears had been in present truth.

The Anglo-Israelite theory is another example of genealogies to avoid. Such proponents say that one must be identified either literally or as a proselyte with the Jewish nation, especially the ten tribes. The customs, names, etc., of nations and people are studied in detail to prove or disprove a relationship. For instance, in England the stone on which Jacob rested his head is supposedly underneath the throne on which the queen sits. Also, it is claimed that the lion of the tribe of Judah is related to the throne of England. These are supposedly clues that the British nation, the Anglo-Saxons, are somehow related to the ten tribes of Israel. However, since Paul said it did not matter whether a Christian was a Jew or a Gentile, black or white, a master or a slave, what point is there in studying such genealogies? We should beware of unprofitable theories that use intellectual and investigative powers to no avail, for they are a snare. Another example of genealogies to avoid is the way Mormonism traces ancestry in great detail in order to “save” people.

A person's genealogy is not what counts, for *each individual* must stand or fall before the Lord. Each person works out his *own* salvation (Phil. 2:12). However, we should not forget that *proper* genealogy has a place. For example, Jesus' genealogy is traced in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.

The Pastor said that if a brother continues to ride a particular hobby after he has had an opportunity to present it to the class, so that it interferes with the general spirit of worship and progress in study, the elders should warn him that he is being contentious, contrary to the Scriptures. If a brother was talented, the Pastor gave him an opportunity once a year to air the subject in a sermon. A class can also grant such an opportunity. Or a brother might have opportunity to express himself in a study. After a reasonable length of time, if the brother continues to harp on the matter, then the elders have the responsibility to curb that undue emphasis, for the brother was given opportunity for adequate expression.

Comment: *Reprint* No. 4008 says that contention for nonfundamental issues is reproved by the Scriptures.

Foolish controversies, genealogies, and contentions such as striving about the Law are unprofitable and vain. They are vain in the sense that they point up the "wisdom" of the expounder. They show off the depth of his investigative powers, for example. If such be the motive, it can be very damaging to the individual.

Titus 3:10 A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject;

In the epistles in the New Testament is this note of warning, admonition, and rebuke, but many today think such action is un-Christlike. Paul was saying that the *individual himself*, the "heretic," should be warned. Usually there is evil speaking or gossip behind one's back, but Paul was saying to admonish the very individual to his *face*. If the individual does not change after being admonished *twice*, he is to be *rejected*. Thus elders have the responsibility to rebuke under certain circumstances.

"Reject" means "excommunicate." Suppose there is a relative amount of liberty in a class and a certain topic is being discussed. If someone gets contentious, he should be admonished. Contention would be *strong* expression, not just a difference of opinion. If the individual persists, he should be admonished a second time. These incidents might or might not occur in the same meeting. The point is that the heretic would be a constant troublemaker, a habitual disruptive thorn.

Comment: It is important for a class to be able to recognize what are proper issues to contend for. Otherwise, the class could reject one who was *rightfully* defending an important principle or doctrine.

First, the *elder* should call attention to the impropriety of the individual, and then the *class* should *back up* the elder's appraisal. The matter would then become collective. When the elder has to initiate a second admonition, the brethren should follow up by mentioning that they feel it would be better if the brother did not discuss the subject. If the individual persists in bringing up the subject again, he is to be "rejected" the third time. The point is that there is responsibility on the part of the brethren as well as the leadership.

Various translations describe the "heretic" as follows:

1. Revised Standard—"a man who is *factious*" (a schismatic, who feels that others must side with him on a particular issue; one who tries to *divide* the brethren with an issue and *force* them

to *take sides*).

2. New International—"a divisive person," one who is causing divisions.
3. Living Bible—"any one [who is] causing division among you."

Incidentally, the Phillips Modern English translation has "a man [who] is self-opinionated." This rendering is improper, for how can such a quality be measured? Judging someone as high-minded would be entering a nebulous area that should not be treated in such a definitive manner. However, a person who is causing divisions is *strong* on the issue. He needs to be warned and, if necessary, rejected.

Clearly, then, the heretic causes *divisions*. He is strongly harping on an issue, saying, "You must believe this or else!" The elder has to put such a one in his place, and the class should support him, so it becomes a class matter to excommunicate the divisive person from their midst.

The same principle can be reduced to a more modified situation where a person may be argumentative on just one point. "Rejection" in this case would not be excommunication; the elder would simply say, "You have had enough to say." The individual should be quieted, and if he remains silent and does not press the issue, at least he is obedient to the admonition.

Thus there are *varying degrees* of being disruptive. Sometimes the class, but not the individual, sees the matter as disruptive. At other times, the individual knows he is being disruptive and intends to cause trouble. This latter situation is more serious and must be dealt with more *firmly*. He would be given three opportunities and then excommunicated if not amenable to the admonitions.

The Pastor said that elders are especially to heed this advice. The first admonition should be reasonably gentle and the second one stronger. If the admonitions are not heeded, the individual could be asked to meet elsewhere, but a formal excommunication would not be indicated. An example of such a factious individual might be one who is domineering at meetings in presenting radical views. If the factious one happens to be an elder, he should not be re-elected as long as that continues to be his attitude.

The "excommunication" mentioned earlier would pertain to a particular ecclesia; that is, the matter would not necessarily be published as in the case of 1 Corinthians 5, where other classes are warned. Rather, the "heretic" would be barred from the class in which he was factious and would be advised to meet elsewhere. If the heretic went to another class and continued to cause divisions, then his attitude would be obvious and self-evident, and the second class would have to deal similarly with the matter and tell him to leave.

However, in regard to the sins of 1 Corinthians 5, the sin of adultery, for example, might not be known elsewhere unless the class that did the excommunicating published the matter. These sins are not self-evident—unless, of course, they are repeated openly in the new location—and meanwhile, there would be a danger of meeting and fellowshiping with the individual. Thus there should be a formal excommunication in such cases.

Q: What action, if any, should an ecclesia take if a brother himself has not committed a grievous sin (such as adultery) but argumentatively supports and acts in favor of the one who has? His reasoning would be to overlook the sin on the premise that "God is love." Shouldn't he be excommunicated?

A: Yes, but if others in the class also support the wrong reasoning and will not act, then our

only alternative is to leave the class.

In other words, if a person is factious along any line, and some in the class sympathize with him instead of supporting the elder who admonishes him, one of two things must happen: (1) If the majority support the elder, then the minority should leave and go elsewhere. (2) If the minority support the elder, then they and the elder should leave and go elsewhere.

In a less radical situation where an elder is the factious one, the class could hold a special election and not vote him in as elder. This intermediary step would be taken in the hope that the elder would learn the lesson. This step would work *if* the class supported the *right* side of the issue.

However, if an elder warned and admonished a brother, feeling he was completely out of order, and the class refused to back up the elder, what recourse would the elder have but to leave the ecclesia? The heretic should have been rejected, for he was a real troublemaker.

We are not to get involved in the types of arguments that are listed in verse 9—whether in the ecclesia or outside, such as in the home or the business world. We are to avoid them at all times. However, the heretic engages in these unprofitable arguments and keeps pressing the issue. If persisted in, the arguments could lead to a more dangerous condition. Therefore, Paul was alerting Titus to the danger and urging him to nip such a situation in the bud by avoiding these issues in the first place. If an individual will not avoid such an issue but gets involved and then presses it on the class, the treatment must be *radical*, namely, rejection after two admonitions, each admonition being initiated by the elder and supported by the class. Rejection (excommunication, telling the heretic to meet elsewhere) must come from a class vote. The elder does not have the authority to single-handedly say, “Get out,” for the class has to back him up in a more formalized manner with a vote. Then the elder can say something like the following: “We have considered this matter. You have been warned twice, yet you are continuing to do the same thing. The class has advised me that now, under this circumstance, you should meet elsewhere.” This would be the extreme case.

Now let us consider a lesser or intermediate degree. The same principle can be followed but modified to lesser and varying degrees to where the elder merely has the responsibility of keeping the individual quiet. He might say, “Let’s drop this issue.” If the brother submits, that ends the issue, and there is no more contention.

Even in the more radical case, the excommunication would not be formal. The elder would say, “We advise you to meet elsewhere.” On the other hand, in a formal excommunication such as in 1 Corinthians 5, the whole brotherhood at large is informed and should not meet with the individual unless he repents.

The disposition of a factious person would be *obvious*, whereas certain other sins might not be. For example, Paul named Alexander the coppersmith, who did him much harm, so that the brotherhood would be aware of the individual’s dangerous ways. This example is the principle of a wolf in *sheep’s* clothing. Such an individual should be disclosed to the other brethren so that their thinking will not be swayed. However, a wolf in *wolf’s* clothing should be self-evident to the brethren.

Alexander the coppersmith had evil motives in stirring up the Jewish brethren against Paul; namely, he did not want his business of making objects for the worship of Artemis (Diana) to suffer. His business would have been adversely affected if Paul prospered too much.

A person who is openly factious becomes obvious, so a letter would not have to be published.

Exposure is essential, though, if the matter is insidious. And if certain erroneous doctrinal declarations are made that sway multitudes, these should be pointed out publicly.

Some are cantankerous *in the manner* in which they bring up arguments, and their wrong spirit is obvious and self-evident. Such individuals should not be tolerated or pussyfooted with. Others may be disputatious, but whether or not the issue is important is significant. If the issue is important and the disputer is right, then the matter should be contended for. However, if the disputer is in error, then his wrong should be called attention to by the elder first and by the class second.

Where the doctrinal difference is *subtle but radical*, the matter would have to be published among the brethren. But where the wrong spirit is manifested, the matter would not have to be published. For example, a subtle universal salvation teaching would have to be pointed out publicly. If the person did not amend his ways, he would be heading for Second Death—and so would those who were influenced by him, for he was *sinning!*

Titus 3:11 Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.

“Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth.” The word “subverted” means “perverted,” “turned upside down.” The heretic *sins* and is subverted. He will ruin his own destiny *unless* he repents.

“Being condemned of himself.” The heretic *condemns himself* by his *own* actions—he brings the situation on himself. Thus he is rejected or put out by the class because of his own actions. Of course the heretic would not necessarily feel self-condemnation, for if he persists the *third* time after repeated warnings, he certainly is not amenable to correction and is not conscience-stricken.

In years past in another ecclesia, an individual was rebuked but never came back and thus condemned himself. He was admonished because in a class election, he would not vote for *anybody* for *any* office.

Titus 3:12 When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis: for I have determined there to winter.

Titus 3:13 Bring Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them.

Verse 12 shows that Paul was not in prison at this time, for he planned to winter in Nicopolis. This verse is also an evidence that Titus was written between 1 and 2 Timothy. At the time the second letter to Timothy was written, Paul was in the dungeon in Rome, and Titus had deserted and gone to Dalmatia (2 Tim. 4:10).

Probably this Apollos is the same individual who was mentioned in Acts 18:24. This commendation is interesting in view of his early zeal but lack of certain understanding until he was given proper instruction. Obviously, Apollos received that instruction with a right heart attitude and corrected his thinking accordingly. Here Paul indicated his respect for Apollos by desiring that Titus bring him along.

Paul probably did not write the Epistle to Titus from Nicopolis but intended to go there for the winter and wanted the others to meet him there. This Nicopolis seems to be the one on the coast of Macedonia opposite Italy. Titus was going to meet Paul at Nicopolis and bring Apollos

and Zenas the lawyer, but Titus deserted instead, Nicopolis being near Dalmatia.

Titus had been left in Crete to establish the churches there (Titus 1:5). After a period of time, Paul was sending either Artemas or Tychicus as a replacement so that Titus would be free to come to Paul. When Titus was able to come, Paul requested that Apollos and Zenas be brought along. It is likely that Paul wanted Zenas the lawyer because he suspected there would be another trial, and he needed advice.

Titus 3:14 And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.

Paul was suggesting that the local brethren support Titus, Apollos, and Zenas on their journey, opening their pocketbooks and their homes. Elsewhere Paul said that any man who refused to work was to be avoided (2 Thess. 3:10-14). However, the Scriptures also say that those who labor in the Word are honorable (1 Tim. 5:17). Now Paul was suggesting that the brethren be generous in regard to Titus, Apollos, and Zenas, freeing them to journey to Paul. He was also suggesting that the generosity be extended to Titus's replacement—that the brethren should support the ministers of the Word until they got established. In both cases, the generosity should be “for necessary uses,” that is, for *necessities*.

Titus 3:15 All that are with me salute thee. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen.

Notice that Paul did not mention the brethren by name: “All that are with me salute thee.” His words show that he was in a different area, not Rome.

“Greet them that love us in the faith.” This very expression signifies that Paul had lost a great deal of his previous respect in the Church. Many no longer properly evaluated his ministry. But conversely, those who remained loyal to Paul were loved much more fervently. They were knit closely together.